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ABSTRACT

The articles in this publication discuss the use of volunteers in school reading programs. Among the topics dealt with are the advantages to teachers, children, and school districts of using classroom volunteers; types of administrative support that are essential for running a successful volunteer program; current trends in volunteering; motives and characteristics of volunteers; organizational techniques that improve a volunteer program's chance of success; tutoring programs run by private businesses; methods for recruiting school volunteers; and general principles for school volunteer programs. An annotated list of eight publications dealing with volunteer programs and tutoring is included. (GW)

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REPORTING ON READING

DEC. 1977
VOL. 4 NO. 1

ED153202

THIS ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS IN READING

PASS IT ON

Want to give others a look, too? Route it to them.

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RIGHT TO READ '77

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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TRENDS & ISSUES
VOLUNTEERS: AN EXPANDING CONTRIBUTION

"Over a decade ago in this country, education began to make a transition from a model that was reasonably self-reliant and, frankly, somewhat walled off from the community to one that now seeks out and depends on active citizen participation. And school volunteers are playing a large part in this movement," explained John W. Alden, executive director of the National School Volunteer Program, Inc. (NSVP), a nonprofit educational association in Alexandria, Virginia.

In schools all over America, an estimated 5,000,000 volunteers work in many ways to expand the educational opportunities and experiences of children and adults. Motives for volunteering may be as varied as the individuals who volunteer. As Kimon Zachos, a volunteer working in Manchester, New Hampshire, said, "First of all, I

(Continued on page 6)

BRIEFLY...

From its inception, the Right to Read Effort has recognized the valuable part those outside the teaching profession can play in developing the reading skills of all citizens.

In activities supported by Right to Read and by other agencies, parents, older adults, community people, youth, business and industry, and public and private organizations are actively and freely supporting a wide variety of reading programs.

Recognizing the importance of community support and involvement, this issue of Reporting on Reading looks at the ways volunteer programs across the country are organized and discusses some methods of recruiting, supporting, and training volunteers to assist in reading programs.

Issues to Come:

February Encouraging Staff Teamwork

April Reading Enjoyment and Affective Development

June Parents as Models for Reading

August Reading and Measurement

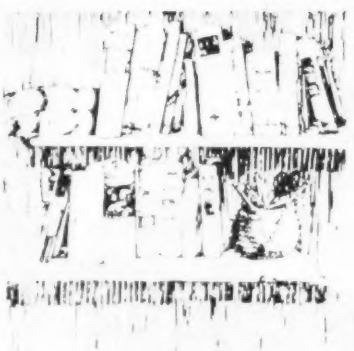
September Administrators Emphasize and Support Reading Programs

GUEST FEATURE
VOLUNTEERS CAN TEACH READING

What happens to a school reading program when volunteers are introduced? In what ways must the regular reading program be shaped so that volunteers can begin to make a contribution to student learning?

Reporting on Reading invited three project administrators, from widely separated parts of the country, to talk with one another about these and other questions related to the contributions of volunteers in reading.

(Continued on page 2)



RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS ...WHO STAY

Organizing and developing a successful volunteer program can be a vexing problem for a school district. "As long as we are talking to the volunteers, they seem to react favorably," one superintendent said. "Then when we leave, something happens — the enthusiasm and commitment seem to cool off."

Unhappily, this district's experience is not unusual. And yet, other districts across the country report a different experience. For them, running a volunteer program is satisfying and rewarding — an exercise in gaining community support for the program and placing numbers of willing helpers in schools that welcome them.

What has made the difference? Are there organizational techniques that will improve a program's chances of success? Are these methods universally available? School administrators with viable volunteer programs believe the answer to these questions is yes.

Define Your Purposes

Volunteer programs need volunteers, so logically the first step

(Continued on page 7)

VOLUNTEERS CAN TEACH READING

(Continued)

From their perspective as administrators of projects that depend heavily on volunteer assistance and have been approved for national dissemination by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel,* the participants provide some interesting insights into the kinds of roles volunteers can take in teaching reading.

Audrey Jackson is the director of the School Volunteer Development Project (SVDP) in Dade County, Florida. The project coordinates all volunteer services in the Dade County Public Schools — the fifth largest district in the nation. An important feature of the project is its series of training programs, offered not only to volunteers but also to administrators and teachers who work with volunteers. Dr. Jackson is also president of the National School Volunteer Program, Inc., and chairs the Florida State Advisory Council on Volunteers. She is author of Plan, Polish, Promote, and Practice a School Volunteer Program *published by the Florida Research Council.*

Mabel Kenyon directs the High Intensity Tutoring Project (HIT) in Highland Park, Michigan, a city within the city of Detroit. This year 400 students from seventh and eighth grades are tutoring more than 200 sixth graders in activities meant to enhance the reading skills of both tutors and tutored. Mrs. Kenyon has had considerable experience in elementary education both as a teacher and school administrator.

Betty Scharff is assistant director of HOSTS, Inc., in Vancouver, Washington. Help One Student to Succeed (HOSTS) focuses the efforts of nearly 2,000 volunteers on improving the reading ability of students and adults through one-to-one tutoring. To expand its dissemination efforts, HOSTS is now organized as a nonprofit corporation. Ms. Scharff is a reading specialist and has been associated with HOSTS since 1973. Working with the project, she has helped develop and edit project materials, and presently plans and conducts training workshops.

Q: *Teaching a person to read is a pretty complicated process, even for the specialist. How then can volunteers "presume" to teach a child to read?*

Audrey Jackson: I'd like to say for openers that even though teaching a person to read can be a very complicated and sophisticated process, learning to read is, after all, a very natural process. With the right kind of support, I think anyone will learn to read. One of the things volunteers can do is to provide the supportive activities and the one-to-one interaction that makes learning to read easier for the child. I might mention that in a study we did in 1973, we found that students below grade placement who were being tutored by trained volunteers, working under the direction of a teacher, were making seven months of progress every two and a half months as measured by a standardized achievement test. So we think that not only can volunteers, as you say, "presume" to tutor in reading, but they can also be highly effective at it.

Mabel Kenyon: I would certainly agree with you, Audrey. And, let me add one other thing: The benefits aren't one-sided. In our program, we have seventh and eighth graders tutoring sixth graders. And we've found that the tutors themselves will gain a month or more per month simply because they are getting the kind of practice they need, as well as the rewards that go with knowing they are doing something that is valued. So not only does the child who is being tutored gain, but the tutor gains as well.

Betty Scharff: I think, too, that by having volunteers come in and work with children, we've removed some of the scariness — some of the mystery associated with teaching a child to read. Volunteers begin to see reading as a continuum of skills — many of which they can help teach. But, I know, too, that our volunteers wouldn't feel at all comfortable if they felt that they, and they alone, were expected to teach a child to read. But when the backup work — things like diagnosis and materials selection — is done by people who have expertise in the area of reading, then the volunteers can work effectively with the students. And it's then we start to see results.

Audrey Jackson: What you're saying then, Betty, is that the volunteer has got to know that he or she is going to be working under the direction of a professional staff person. That's the key, I agree. For one thing, in our state at least, it's required by law. But as you mentioned, when volunteers know they're going to be working with a professional person — a person trained to teach reading — they don't feel as though they're working in a vacuum with only themselves to rely upon.

Betty Scharff: You know, something else we've noticed is that when volunteers start to assist with reading, they seem to develop a deeper respect for what the reading specialist is trying to do. And yet, they also know that they have something to offer that the reading specialist or the classroom teacher often isn't able to give the student — individual attention and one-to-one teaching.

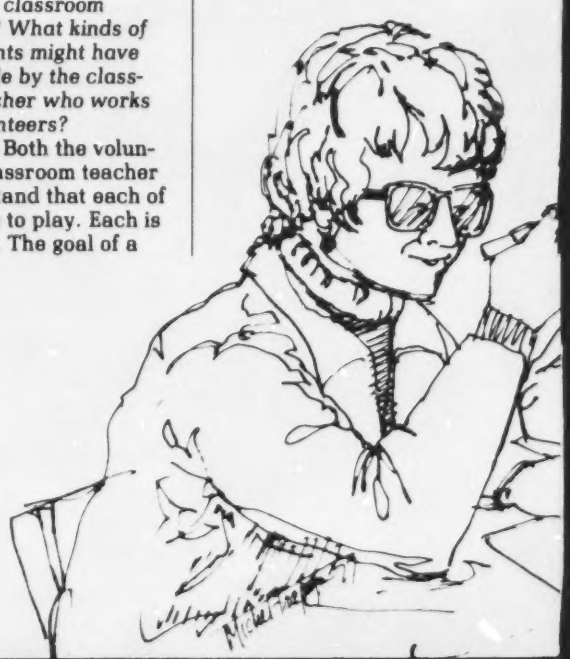
Audrey Jackson: I think that's generally true with many people working as volunteers in education. They seem to develop a greater insight into the problems that teachers face. We find that one of the greatest benefits of a volunteer program is that when people get involved, they tend to get a better understanding of what education is really about.

Q: *So from what you've said, the volunteers, the children, and the school district benefit. But what about the classroom teachers? What kinds of adjustments might have to be made by the classroom teacher who works with volunteers?*

Mabel Kenyon: Both the volunteer and the classroom teacher need to understand that each of them has a role to play. Each is very important. The goal of a good inservice training program is to get teachers and volunteers to see and accept that point. Most times, though, adjustment isn't a problem. Most teachers understand, almost intuitively, that another pair of hands, another mind, another pair of legs, are just what they, and the children, need. Many teachers feel a great sense of relief knowing that "now, I have someone to work closely with — someone who can do the kinds of things that I know need doing, but haven't had time to do."

Audrey Jackson: From having worked this past year and a half with the National School Volunteer Program, I've observed a great change taking place in higher education. Creeping into more and more teacher education programs are courses dealing with auxiliary school personnel, including volunteers. In the future I think we are going to find that the teacher is better prepared, more positively receptive, and more anxious to have school volunteers' help in reading and in other areas as well.

Betty Scharff: Another aspect of this question of teachers and volunteers has to do with need. If teachers are to work effectively with volunteers, they've got to see a need for having them. In reading, I see that need arising from an increased use of diagnostic testing. Diagnostic tests tell teachers that they can't merely group children into three stable reading groups. More



groups and more people are necessary if diagnosis is to lead anywhere instructionally. Here, the one-to-one instruction that volunteers can offer can make such a difference.

Q: *Let's get away from ideas about volunteering and go to volunteers as individuals. I wonder if you've ever tried to sketch a profile of the volunteer who is especially effective in assisting with reading.*

Audrey Jackson: In Miami, because of the size of our city, it's impossible to sketch one profile. In fact, the only commonalities are that the person who is an effective volunteer is always positive about young people in general and feels a sense of obligation about being in the schools to help. Other than that, it runs the gamut — every conceivable age, every ethnic group, male and female, and all kinds of educational backgrounds and experience.

Betty Scharff: I really would agree with you, Audrey. I find, in looking at successful tutors, that the number one requirement is dependability. And I mean not just showing up on time, but having a willingness to make a real commitment to help that student. We also find that our volunteers run the full gamut as far as background is concerned and that each person has something special and unique to offer. If volunteers are encouraging and interested in helping the child, everything else will work out.

Mabel Kenyon: I would also like to add that volunteers must be caring people — people who are willing to share. They must be willing to share of themselves and their knowledge. In working with our students, we find that tutors develop feelings of empathy for those they are tutoring. Because we select tutors who may have some reading difficulties themselves, it is almost as if they are thinking, "I have been there myself, and I know how you feel."

Q: *One last question — What kind of administrative support have you found to be essential for running a successful volunteer program?*

Audrey Jackson: If I could point to one thing that would ultimately lead to a successful volunteer program, it would be to develop a central, organized system for providing services. We have found that with a central, organized school volunteer program, it is much easier to provide support and training for the volunteer, to seek information from school administrators, teachers, and from volunteers, and, in general, to gain access to the resources in the community. In disseminating our program, we have worked with individual schools, but we strongly encourage district-wide participation.

Betty Scharff: I think that is really true. I might also mention that we find that having administrators involved in the volunteer training is very important. By attending some of the sessions, they get a first-hand understanding and appreciation for what is happening. Also, seeing an administrator at a training session gives the volunteers visible evidence that they have an important role to play in the school.

Mabel Kenyon: I certainly concur with you both. I think the key to a successful program is that the decision-maker has to buy into it fully. Then that enthusiasm has to be communicated to the teachers and the other support staff until everyone involved begins to feel some commitment — some feeling of ownership — for the program. Then it works. But until you get that feeling of ownership from the superintendent on down, I don't think a program will ever get off the ground.

Audrey Jackson: Mabel, that is absolutely true. I know we have stressed over and over in our awareness sessions that unless you have the support of top-level administrators, there's no point in pursuing it any further.

Betty Scharff: We also find that, sure, you can have one teacher working with volunteers, but no matter how successful that teacher is, success can't be spread without administrative support. So if you go into a program really wanting it to work, you just have to start at the top. Then help all of the people involved to understand the program, and to begin to feel that the things happening in it are important to them as people, to the children, and to the school.

**The Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) was established by the Education Division of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1972. Originally a part of the U.S. Office of Education, the review panel was enlarged in 1975 by the addition of representatives from the National Institute of Education. The JDRP meets periodically to review the evidence of effectiveness submitted for a wide variety of educational products and practices developed through Federally supported programs. Only those submissions that are approved by the JDRP may be in any way endorsed by the Education Division or disseminated as exemplary using Federal Education Division funds.*

TALKING IT OVER

"Talking It Over" is a new feature of *Reporting on Reading* this year. It is a readers' column. Your comments, suggestions, corrections, and reproofs are welcome. But more is intended.

You are invited to submit questions or pose problems that you find especially complicated or puzzling. The questions may be related to the topic of the issue or to anything else related to reading instruction. Hopefully, someone, somewhere will have some ideas for you. The letters received will appear in the next issue.

Address your comments, questions, answers, or ideas to: *Reporting on Reading*, CEMREL, Inc., 3120 59th Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63139.

To "prime" the column, here are two questions asked by several people across the country as they talked with us about their volunteer programs:

Q: My volunteer program works fine in elementary school, but something happens when I try to recruit for the junior or senior high. People just don't seem to be as interested in working with older students. Any suggestions?

Q: Funding is a constant problem. Many people think that because volunteers work for nothing, the program is cost-free. What's a good approach for raising a little money to pay for small, but important things like postage, stationery, printing, and occasional get-togethers?

VOLUNTEERS FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR COOPERATE WITH SCHOOLS

Some of the most active volunteer programs in the nation are run not by school districts, but by private businesses or corporations. In Chicago, for example, the Montgomery Ward Corporation operates a neighborhood tutoring program for over 115 students in inner-city Chicago schools. Now in its thirteenth year of operation, this program matches corporation employees with students in grades 2-6 for enrichment activities and extra help in reading. But it is this and much more. "A natural relationship between the tutor and the child develops," explains Dan Basil, coordinator of the program for Montgomery Ward, "and it gives a great deal of ego support to the kids, which, in turn, helps them toward greater achievement in school."

Sessions are held in the Montgomery Ward cafeteria twice each week, with "extras" — trips to the zoo or to the library — arranged as needed. This year, the program has been strengthened by the addition of Right to Read teachers who test students and advise tutors on the adoption and use of materials. In addition, an extra effort is being made to coordinate volunteer help with the school district's instruction. Basil notes that Montgomery Ward is interested in helping other corporations set up similar programs.

The Sun Company (formerly Sun-Oil) is another corporation involved with education. Based in Philadelphia, it provides release time for over 35 of its home- and office-branch employees to tutor two hours per week in schools in Philadelphia, Dallas, Texas, and Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Now in its tenth year of operation, this program coordinates employees' strengths in many areas — reading, music, art — with students' interests. Employees are encouraged to enrich the program by taking children to special events, to lunch, or to work — all at Sun Company expense. A spokesman for Sun pointed out that the company's procedural manual for providing release time for employees is available to other businesses.

Yet a third company with an active program is the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, New York, which operates two programs — one for retirees, and one for current employees. The retiree program transports 13 former employees to Harlem where, under the guidance of the New York City School Volunteer Program, they tutor students in a one-to-one situation twice a week.

In another phase of the program, between 25 and 30 Equitable employees are released to tutor students who come to the Equitable Building for their sessions. Like the Montgomery Ward Program, the Equitable program this year has added elements to strengthen its contribution. Advice from a private, non-profit educational agency is providing Equitable with materials for instruction and consultation on their use. Teachers from the schools are also receiving training in the Equitable materials so that formal instruction may be coordinated with the total program. Emilio Bermiss, assistant director of Equitable's support programs, feels this element of the program is going to make his company's contribution even more substantial. Like others in the business sector, he is enthusiastic and optimistic about the overall possibilities of business' supporting the educational system.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED: PERMANENT POSITIONS AVAILABLE

"Help our children. Be a school volunteer": It's to the point and short enough to fit on a bumper sticker. And it's one of the ways school districts are recruiting volunteers.

"Finding volunteers is the hard part," observed one school administrator. "We even have a school community aide who's out ringing doorbells almost all the time, trying to find people who would be willing to devote an hour a week to the schools. Sometimes we're lucky; a lot of times, we're not. It's very hard to get volunteers."

Let People Know You're Around; Then Say "Hello"

Programs that have been successful in attracting volunteers seem to use a two-pronged approach, emphasizing awareness followed by contact.

Signs on city busses, radio and television spots, posters with tear-off telephone numbers, or a booth in a county fair — all are examples of ways to make people more aware of a volunteer program. "The point of our publicity campaigns is to get people to say to themselves, 'Oh, sure, I've heard about you and I know what you're doing,' " one volunteer coordinator said. "We want to be a known, familiar part of the way people think about their schools."

Creating public awareness is necessary. But alone, it is not enough; there is no substitute for face-to-face contact. In deciding whom to contact first, Mary Jara Kirby, coordinator of bilingual education of the Fort Worth (Texas) Independent School District, advises, "Always start with parent groups first. Because parents, more than others, have a vested interest in the schools, they are prime candidates for a volunteer program.

"We find that parents are more willing to volunteer if they have had previous, pleasant contacts with the school," Ms. Kirby notes. "In our own program we have a number of bilingual aides. I encourage them to call parents any time they can just to say 'hello' and to tell them about whatever's going on in the school. That way, when it is time to ask for volunteers, parents will be used to regular contacts with the school and will want to become involved."

Once a volunteer program gets started, the volunteers themselves recruit other volunteers. "Some coordinators say to me, 'I only have four volunteers in my program,' " explains Gin Guerin, assistant director of the New Hampshire School Volunteer Program. "I tell them, 'If you have four volunteers who are pleased with what they're doing, you're going to get four or eight more.' Satisfied volunteers are the best recruiters of other volunteers. Word of mouth really does work."

Prevent Volunteer Dropout By...

Attracting volunteers is a beginning, but if a program is to continue, volunteers must stay. "Volunteers who go in and out of a program may cause problems for everybody," emphasizes Nancy Wilson, who coordinates Right to Read in the Newark (Delaware) School District. "Sure, we want volunteers, but we try to let them know that if they're not sure they can stick with the program, they shouldn't start."

Coordinators emphasize three points for keeping volunteers involved:

Matching the volunteer to the job Volunteers can help in many ways. Tutoring is one way, but there are others, of course. Volunteers can work with small groups of students or move about the room answering questions. Many may prefer filing, while others enjoy preparing materials. The lesson here is simple — task variety is important. The more tasks available, the greater the possibility of getting a good

ON READING

fit between volunteer interest and school needs. "We know that not all volunteers are interested in the same things, so we try to match their interests with school needs," explains Greer Fry of Cedar Rapids. "Because they feel comfortable with the work they're doing, they're more likely to stay."

Letting the volunteers know their efforts are appreciated "There are many ways of saying 'thank you,' " notes Shirley Jacobs, coordinator of paraprofessional personnel in the Canton (Ohio) City Schools, "but we feel the most important way is for the teacher who is working with the volunteer and the principal and staff in that building to say, 'Oh, how are you this morning? I'm so glad you came.' Teachers need to take the time to sit down with the volunteer and ask, 'What do you think the progress is here?' or 'What's been happening there?' Volunteers must know that by coming, they are having an impact on the school."

Mrs. McElveen of Charlotte/Mecklenburg seconds this view. "Recognition has to be on a continuing basis. Teas, luncheons, and certificates are nice, but they're not what keeps a program going. A smiling face, a 'warm fuzzy' really go far."

Keeping the avenue for advancement open Connie Haendle, director of field services for Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., focuses on a point sometimes overlooked: "We find that the volunteers who stay with us the longest are those who have become involved in the organizational end of the program as trainers or coordinators. Not all volunteers will want to become building coordinators or even district coordinators, but some might wish to do so. For those who do, the opportunity needs to be there."

"A Pretty Neat Reason for Leaving"

Volunteers leave a program for many reasons. Some have nothing to do with the program itself. A volunteer who has learned something good and satisfying about himself or herself has the best reason for leaving, claims Shirley Jacobs: "I like to see our program as a training ground for people to develop skills. I would like volunteers to come away from their experience as more competent, capable people. If they leave us better off than when they came in, that's a pretty neat reason for leaving."

To work effectively, volunteers need to know what they are expected to do. Here a teacher demonstrates a lesson and will leave the volunteer with an outline for reference.

(Courtesy of Parent-Child Early Education Program, Ferguson-Florissant [Missouri] School District)

RESOURCES

Caring Takes Planning

The Illinois State Office of Education has published a short book called *Because They Care: A Resource Manual for Volunteer Programs*. Highlighting methods of planning volunteer programs, the book is filled with hints for finding volunteers, training them, and using them effectively in school programs. Special attention is given to the importance of older adults in volunteer programs and to volunteers in career education programs.

Copies available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210; $5.08; order no. ED 130 250.

By the People, For the . . . Children

Michael and Lise Wallach of Duke University boldly call their new book *Teaching All Children to Read*. In it, the Wallachs outline an instructional program in reading that relies heavily on involving people from the community as tutors. On the basis of their research evidence (collected mainly from public schools on the South Side of Chicago), the authors maintain that community tutors can help first-grade children who are seemingly headed for reading failure to learn to read competently.

Available from The University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637; $12.95.

One Size Fits All?

Benjamin DaSilva and Richard D. Lucas use their book, *Practical School Volunteer and Teacher-Aide Programs*, to describe the various demands different school subjects make on volunteers. There is a chapter on using volunteers in reading, and there are others on volunteers in early childhood education, creative arts, mathematics, and in assisting in school management.

Copies available from Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632; $8.95.

Success Breeds Success

If you would like to know more about volunteer programs in reading or about volunteer programs in general, you may want to read some of the "Success Stories" collected by the National School Volunteer Program. These are one- to three-page vignettes filled with tips and cautions modestly described by the people who lived them. A quarter per story is all they cost. Also, success stories of your own are always welcome.

Copies available from the National School Volunteer Program, Inc., 300 North Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

More Powerful Than a Locomotive

It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Supertutor! From the Utah State Board of Education comes a complete learning package called *How to be a Super Tutor*, written by Bonnie Morgan, Kay Kayekissel, and Jane Doran. The package includes filmstrip, cassette, and booklet. Together, the pieces are designed to train volunteers to help youngsters become more proficient oral readers. While the materials can be used by a volunteer coordinator to train new volunteers, the self-correcting response booklet keyed to tape and frame makes the package suitable for self-instruction.

Copies available from the State Board of Education, Att. Ms. Bonnie Morgan, 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111; $20.00.

Lifesaver

"We have more volunteers than requests," says William Bieker, project director of Project SAVE in Tigard, Oregon. SAVE (Senior Aide Volunteer Educator) is now over six years old and this year has placed over 100 older adults as volunteers in every elementary school in the district. Time has taught the staff at Tigard much about establishing and maintaining a program that depends on older adults for its lifeblood. Their ideas, distilled into 90 pages of readable prose, are available to others in *A Manual for Developing a Senior Citizen Teacher Aide Program*, published by the Oregon State Department of Education.

(Continued)

RESOURCES

(Continued)

Copies available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210; $5.08; order no. ED 132 139.

A Five-Finger Exercise

"Ask a child to pick up a book, open it to the middle, and read it silently. Everytime the child comes across a word he or she doesn't understand or can't pronounce, a finger goes down on the page. No fingers means the book's too easy; five fingers — the book's too hard," said Leonore Sleisenger, describing the Jeannette Veatch technique she and Joyce Lancaster have included in their book, *Guidebook for the Volunteer Reading Teacher (Revised Edition)*. The book is loaded with similar techniques that may be used by volunteers assisting in reading. Compared to the first edition of *Guidebook*, the revised version has more sophisticated techniques for diagnosing and teaching reading skills. "We've learned what volunteers can really do, and we're giving them much more credit than we did in the first edition of the book," Ms. Sleisenger said.

Copies available from Charles B. Slack, Inc., 6900 Grove Rd., Thorofare, New Jersey 08086; available in early 1978; $3.50 (approximately).

The Warhorse Revised

One hundred thirty-four pages worth of advice: *Volunteers in Education: A Handbook for Coordinators of Volunteer Programs* is the 1975 revision of the popular *ABC's: A Handbook for Educational Volunteers*. Program development, orientation, training activities, and evaluation are all accounted for in a layout that is clean and in a style that is very readable. Developed by the Recruitment Leadership and Training Institute, *A Handbook* is also available in Spanish.

Copies available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210; $7.74; order no. ED 117 341.

See You in Court?

Carol O'Connell and W. Frederick Staub discuss the schools' liability for acts of volunteers in their article, "Legal Aspects of Volunteer Utilization." Published in *The Admininstrator*, a quarterly of the Ohio-based Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the article recommends anticipating potential legal problems during the initial stages of program development and seeking the advice of the school board's legal counsel as policy is being set.

Copies of The Administrator *available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210; $1.88; order no. ED 094 313.*

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VOLUNTEERS: AN EXPANDING CONTRIBUTION

(Continued)

think I do it selfishly. I like the contact with the kids. Every single time I go into that classroom I know that the kids are glad to see me. Afterwards, when I see them downtown and they remember me, I know I've been a pleasure to them. Then, too, I believe reading is the key to everything, and I want to do whatever I can to help."

Who Are the Volunteers?

"By and large, the majority of volunteers in education are women, especially mothers with preschool or elementary-school children," Alden said. Yet, he noted, important as mothers are, others are becoming involved as volunteers. Special populations not previously involved in volunteerism are becoming increasingly important to the success of school volunteer programs.

During the last decade, for example, substantial numbers of students have become involved in teaching other students. Something on the order of 15 percent of all volunteers are teenage volunteers between 14 and 17 years old, and peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring promise to become even more important in the future.

Speaking of the burgeoning interest in student tutoring programs, Jackie Scott, site coordinator for a cross-age tutoring program at Holmes School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, noted: "The essence of these programs is that learning need not be demeaning. You hand a seventh or eighth grader a primary level reader and you can destroy a child's ego. And at that age, they don't need that. Yet I can take those same children, bring them down to tutor first- or second-graders, hand them a primary reader, and they'll work happily with it."

Older Americans are now an important feature of many school volunteer programs. Presently, the number of older volunteers is small, but the potential is large. Twenty-one million Americans are over the age of 65, and over 3,000,000 more under age 65 are retired. "Recruiting older Americans for work in the schools has twin-edge benefits," Alden said. "Clearly, the students benefit immeasurably from having a loving, older person to associate with, particularly since grandmothers and grandfathers are frequently not around. But, too, the volunteers benefit. They have the opportunity to do something that has so much feeling associated with it."

Still small — but growing — is a trend toward corporate involvement in volunteer activities. Looking for new ways to become involved in the community, some businesses and industries have turned to school volunteer programs. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in San Francisco is one company that has an extensive employee release-time program and offers an approach that might be useful to school administrators or volunteer coordinators seeking to enlist the support of business. "Tell people in business they'll have more satisfied employees, a feeling that the company is an important part of the community, and most attractive of all, a better public image," suggests Frank Hyman, the company's personnel analyst.

Again, according to Alden, seeking business involvement should become an important part of volunteer-recruiting efforts. For the children, business involvement means that "parents can participate in the educational lives of their children . . . and that means dads as well as moms."

Niches for Volunteering

Volunteerism flows in so many directions, it is difficult to classify its wide variety of programs and activities. Alden sees four different kinds of volunteer activities now going on across the country:

Tuesday's and Thursday's at 10:00 Regular, ongoing volunteer assistance is offered. The volunteer comes into the school and works so many hours per week.

A one-shot spot A community resource person is recruited to appear once or very infrequently. Greer Fry, who directs the School Volunteer Program of the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Community School District, calls these volunteers "enrichment people." In explaining, she noted, "One class was reading a story about women in broadcasting, so we asked our local weatherwoman to come to the school and talk to the class about her job."

Brokering service assignments Reversing the flow of volunteerism, students go out into the community, instead of bringing the community to the school. Assisted by the school, students volunteer for relevant learning experiences such as reading newspapers or books to visually impaired adults.

Free Advice A relatively rare source of community support comes from those who freely offer their expert or consultant assistance to the schools. A reading specialist from a local university who offers an in-service course for teachers or an attorney who provides legal advice to a volunteer coordinator are two possibilities for such assistance.

Two Thorny Issues

Volunteers and coordinators of volunteers, because they do work in the schools, cannot ignore some of the larger issues confronting education. A teachers' strike is one. What is, or what ought to be, the position of volunteers during a teachers' strike? In an article published in the June, 1977, issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, NSVP President Audrey Jackson explained, "Experience has shown that some superintendents and principals have tried to use volunteers to keep schools open during strikes. We need a national policy statement that affirms the basic tenet that

volunteers are in the schools to assist and supplement teachers, not to replace them."

The National Organization for Women (NOW), in their position statement on volunteerism, raise a more personal issue. Seeking to heighten the awareness of women engaged in volunteer work, they distinguish between 1) volunteer activities that serve to maintain women's dependent and secondary status on the one hand; and 2) change-directed activities that lead to more active participation in the decision making process.

Asked to give an example of "change-oriented volunteerism," Sandra Porter, NOW spokesperson, explained, "Suppose you were in a school system where there was a severe reading-disability problem, and there were no Right to Read Program. Now, suppose some women got together and said to themselves, 'By gum, nobody will give us any money, nobody will support this, but it's what these children need, so we're going to set it up, and we're going to show the schools they need to have this program.' But the goal of that program would be to have funding within a year's time. Now, *that* is women using their power, using their time, using their professional skills . . . We believe that the goal of every worthwhile volunteer program is to be included in the budget within one year or else the women, in truth, are being exploited. They're being used as free labor to solve a societal problem."

Despite unresolved questions about the role of volunteers in a changing society, it seems clear that volunteerism as a force in education continues to grow, involving more people in ever-expanding activities.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS ...WHO STAY

(Continued)

is to begin by recruiting them. Right? Wrong. Volunteer coordinators emphasize that programs that start by ringing doorbells and telephones are inviting trouble.

"First, you have to get straight in your own mind why you want a volunteer program," cautions Madeline McElveen of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Schools. Continuing in the same vein, Greer Fry of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, explains, "Anyone starting a program needs to seriously consider why they're using volunteers. I would hope that they're not starting a program just to save a faltering budget. I look at our program and I tell our volunteers that they're in the school system to give some youngster some badly needed individual attention. That's the right reason for having a program. Seeing it as a way to save money — that's the wrong reason."

Apparently, the words used to think and talk about a volunteer program can have a marked effect on the program itself. Corrine Hill, director of school volunteers, Salt Lake City (Utah) School District, offers a suggestion for keeping the purpose of the program in clear perspective: "There is one word I really hate, and I try to work around it in any way I can when I think or talk about our program. That word is use. When you say use, it sounds as if you're taking advantage of someone."

Find Out Who Needs You

Connie Haendle of Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., a nonprofit organization which trains volunteers to tutor adults in basic reading, has helped organize dozens of volunteer programs. Once the purpose of a program has been thought out, Ms. Haendle advises, a very careful look at local needs must be taken. For a volunteer reading program outside the school, that means taking a close look at the community that will be served. "Find out who needs you, where they are, and how they can be reached," she cautions.

The process is similar for a volunteer program in the schools. The needs of the students and the resources available in the community should be considered. Involve the principals and especially the teachers in the planning, many coordinators emphasize. "I think the teacher is the forgotten person in too many programs," Right to Read Coordinator Nora Forester of the Northside Independent School District (San Antonio, Texas) says. "If not actually involved in planning the program, an inservice meeting with the teachers on working with volunteers is indispensable. Teachers have to see the value of having volunteers in the schools."

Start Small . . .

Resist the temptation to try to do too much too fast. "Start small. Numbers are not important at the beginning of a program," says Mrs. McElveen. "Start where you think the volunteer program will work. Look for a school with a supportive principal and teachers who are willing to try new things. Then let the pilot project sell the rest of the schools. Something that works is very contagious."

But Do Organize

"The key to a successful volunteer program is a coordinator in each building," offers Corrine Hill, Salt Lake City director. "It's a must." That coordinator may be a volunteer, or a teacher who feels that volunteers are an integral part of the school, or the school principal. Other administrators second the idea.

"You must have someone who can schedule, follow-up, carry out contacts, and identify people who will be willing to help in the school," advises William A. Thompson, assistant superintendent of the Anaheim (California) Elementary School District.

Other districts agree, adding that as the program expands, a district volunteer coordinator might be needed. The district coordinator can arrange training workshops, talk with district administrators about matters of policy, and smooth communications at all levels. Volunteer coordinators in some districts also publish newsletters and coordinate media coverage of the program.

In some states, state organizations work directly with volunteer coordinators. In New Hampshire, for example, the New Hampshire School Volunteer Program provides a number of services. Gin Guerin, assistant director of the program, mentions several: "For publicity and recruitment, we have materials such as bumper stickers, posters, filmstrip/cassette presentations, and even short radio spots. Every year we also provide training workshops in many local school districts."

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RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS ...WHO STAY

(Continued)

Ms. Guerin also emphasizes the importance of a statewide newsletter: "We have a newsletter that goes directly to all volunteers in the state. District coordinators send their mailing labels to us and we do the mailing. Each issue has lots of news about individual programs. We feel it's important to boost one another. Sometimes people feel that what they're doing isn't all that much — until they find out that it's just what someone else in another district needs to solve their problem."

Be Prepared

Volunteers must be prepared for their work, coordinators say. "It's not fair to the volunteers and certainly not to the children to neglect training," emphasized one administrator.

In talking about volunteer training, administrators point to two things. First, volunteers need to know what they will be expected to do. "It is crucial that parents know what is expected of them, and that they have guidelines from which to work," notes Marion Wilson of the Ferguson-Florissant (Missouri) School District, where over 93 percent of the parents volunteer to work with four-year olds in "Saturday School," a program approved for national dissemination. "You must explain the goal of the lessons in writing, and explain exactly what the activities are," she says. "You don't just say, 'go and work on such and such.' You've got to explain what the purpose is, and you've got to put that in writing. You've got to prepare for your parents, in other words."

As important as skill training is, it is just part of the picture. Respecting each student's right to confidentiality is also an important part of volunteer training. Expressing the view of many volunteer coordinators, Mrs. Forester of the Northside Independent School District (San Antonio, Texas) says, "I stress confidentiality a lot. I emphasize it in one way or another nearly every day of the training." Illustrating with an example, Mrs. Forester continues, "It's just natural for volunteers to want to brag a bit about what a child is doing. But I always try to show them that what's meant as a compliment to a child can always be turned around. Let's say, a volunteer says to someone in the neighborhood, 'Gee, Joey did a great job in phonics this morning.' That well-intended compliment can be turned around when the neighbor replies, 'My goodness, I didn't know that Joey was having a problem.' "

Several volunteer programs have checks built-in to protect a student's anonymity, and some of these are quite novel. Dee Lundeen, head of the board of volunteer coordinators, Pierre (South Dakota) Independent School District, explains their approach: "In our program, students are never referred to by name. Our program is called the Bucket Brigade because our volunteers carry with them a good-sized bucket filled with learning games. When a volunteer wants to talk about a child to people outside of school, it's always 'my bucket buddy' — never a name."

Benefits versus Headaches

Are the results of volunteer programs worth the effort? School districts with working programs have no doubts on this point. They feel the benefits that accrue to the system involved with volunteers far outweigh the difficulties of setting the program in action. Students in particular, they say, gain in motivation and affective support by having the parent in the school. One administrator notes that parents involved in schools develop a better perspective of the teacher's work, and that between parents who volunteer and their children an "understanding and appreciation that you don't normally find develops around the teachers."

Other administrators agree, adding that the district with a volunteer program creates a broad base of public support — one that can help pass referenda and improve conditions in the schools. They believe that even one successful volunteer program in a single school can act as a magnet, drawing enormous benefits to the system fortunate and organized well enough to have attracted volunteers and to have used them well.

General Principles*

- The school volunteer program operates with the approval of the board of education and the school administration and is at all times guided by the principles and policies of the school district.
- Volunteers are assigned to a school for volunteer service only upon the request of the teacher, principal, or other school personnel.
- Volunteers serve only in an auxiliary capacity under the direction and supervision of professional school personnel.
- A volunteer supplies supplemental and supportive service and is not a substitute for a member of a school staff.
- Wherever possible, volunteers are assigned to the particular school where they wish to serve.
- A volunteer does not have access to confidential files and records.
- The relationship between volunteers and the school staff should be one of mutual respect and confidence.

**In six years, the School Volunteer Program of the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Community School District has grown from 150 to nearly 1000 volunteers. These general principles, reproduced (with permission) from their program manual, Because We Care, may provide useful suggestions for new programs.*

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